



Mishawaka Communicator



Working together to build the "Best Hometown in America" by delivering exceptional services, promoting safe and clean neighborhoods, elevating the quality of life, and inspiring pride in our community.

Dave Wood, Mayor

www.mishawaka.in.gov

December 2012

A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood



It seems as though we can't go a day without hearing news of cities, states or even nations on the verge of declaring bankruptcy. Indeed, with the United States federal government carrying a debt load of over \$16 trillion (yes, that's trillion with a "T") it is hard to imagine how that won't have serious consequences for generations to come.

Against that backdrop, it seems a fitting time to update you on the current financial condition of the City of Mishawaka. It is my top priority to keep the City in a strong financial condition. That will not be easy given the uncertainty that persists, especially at the national level.

One important goal I have set to help the City maintain a strong position is to get the City debt free.

On the national level, we continue to live with fiscal uncertainty with the predominant issue at the national level being the much hyped "fiscal cliff" and what tough decisions should be made to avoid the resulting tax hikes and drastic cuts. At the state level, Indiana has been trending well and in fact, ended the year with a budget surplus. However, uncertainty is still looming large at the State House as funding desired tax cuts and potentially implementing the expansion of Medicaid under the Federal Affordable Care Act are considered.

There is a trend worth noticing though. When you look at fiscal health, whether you are a country, state, or city, there are growing disparities between the have's and have not's. Those with a healthy budget tend to trend healthier, and those with a weak budget trend weaker. As an individual, family, or business, what type of community do you want to live, work and invest in?

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Deciphering Digestive Disorders

From Clinical Nutritional Services at Saint Joseph Regional Medical Center

Living with digestive disorders is uncomfortable and wreaks havoc on your daily life. Digestive disorders can range from an occasional upset stomach to more complex conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome.

Digestive disorders can be caused by bacteria, viruses, or even aggravated by stress and certain foods. There also is a strong family link to certain conditions. Talk to your physician if you regularly experience heartburn, gas, constipation, diarrhea, or stomach pain.

Although some digestive disorders can produce similar symptoms, treatment approaches vary. An accurate diagnosis by your physician is essential in managing your condition.

Following are some conditions and accompanying symptoms that compromise your digestive health:

Peptic ulcers are sores in the lining of your stomach. Caused by a type of bacteria (called *Helicobacter pylori*) or the long-term use of non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs) including aspirin and ibuprofen, ulcers are associated with stomach pain, bloating, and weight loss.

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CITY OFFICES SCHEDULE

CHRISTMAS

December 24th - CLOSED
December 25th - CLOSED

Regular hours will resume on Wednesday, December 26th.

NEW YEAR'S

December 31st - OPEN
January 1st - CLOSED

Regular hours will resume on Wednesday, January 2nd.

Upcoming Events!

"ROCKIN' THROUGH THE WINTER"

DAY CAMP

Dec. 26, 27, 28 and Jan. 2, 3, 4

Youths ages 6-11. Indoor and outdoor activities planned.

9:30am - 3:30pm

or

7:30am - 5:30pm

Contact Mishawaka Parks at (574) 258-1664 for more info.

(camp fee required)

A Letter from Mayor Dave Wood (continued)

My job as Mayor is to help ensure that Mishawaka continues to trend healthier and stronger. Although Mishawaka can't control the national economy or other factors in our region, we can control our own actions and resources. Recently, my administration worked with the Common Council to pass another balanced budget that provides investment in public safety, streets, and parks, while including modest cost of living increases for our employees. Budgets are about making choices and setting priorities. Mishawaka's success continues to be founded on being fiscally conservative, and not incurring long term legacy costs that could jeopardize that status in times of uncertainty.

Right now is a time of stability for the City's budget where some of the past debt the City has undertaken will be paid off. Debt is usually required to complete larger projects such as a new fire station or a communication system. The City's general obligation debt is meant for long term investments, and a case could be made for maintaining our current level of debt and pursuing another long-term investment in the City.

Rather than maintaining debt, I believe that the real investment in the City that needs to occur at this time given the fiscal cloudiness above us is being free of the general obligation debt. Right now we don't know how tax changes at the state level will impact municipalities, we don't know what the long-term costs to health insurance will be, and we don't know what the lingering effects of the recession has been on assessed valuation and tax collections. Being debt free has the potential to safeguard against these unknowns, it could positively impact tax rates (resulting in tax relief for our citizens), and will also improve our capacity to take on new debt if it were absolutely needed such as in an emergency. Working closely with the City Controller and key department heads, we have put Mishawaka on track to be free of the general obligation debt by the end of 2014. In fact, this will be the first time this has occurred for the length of our current financial records which date back more than five decades.

Mishawaka, like all cities, is constantly competing for new businesses and jobs. I believe that being debt free is itself a calculated investment that will place the City in a favorable position not only to support our existing families and businesses, but will be an obvious indicator of our fiscal health for prospective investors. As the economy continues to improve, Mishawaka continues to be well positioned to take advantage of that growth and build our future on our past successes.

Mayor Wood



Deciphering Digestive Disorders (continued)

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a functional disorder meaning that the bowel looks normal but doesn't work properly. Characterized by gas, chronic abdominal pain or discomfort, bloating, and diarrhea and/or constipation, IBS does not lead to more serious digestive diseases and often is aggravated by stress.

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) is a general name for two diseases that cause inflammation or ulcerations in the small and large intestines: **Crohn's disease** and **ulcerative colitis**. Symptoms can include intestinal bleeding and fever, as well as cramping, abdominal pain, and diarrhea. Weight loss may occur over time.

Colorectal cancer often develops from abnormal growths, called polyps, on the wall of the colon. If polyps are detected at an early stage, they can be removed before they become cancerous. Many people do not experience any symptoms early on. However, you should see your doctor if you have frequent gas pains, blood in or on the stool, and diarrhea or constipation.

GOVERNMENT IN ACTION



On Monday, November 19th, Mayor Dave Wood's Youth Advisory Council met to deliver their annual Thanksgiving Food Drive boxes that were collected during the months of October and November. The boxes, which were donated by Jamil Packaging, were placed throughout different City Departments to collect food for a "Traditional Thanksgiving Dinner". Martin's Supermarkets provided \$125.00 in Gift Certificates while also discounting turkeys.

"I am proud of these Youth Council Members for their hard work and dedication to this food drive. They are making a difference in our community by reaching out to those less fortunate and taking ownership of such a worthwhile project,"

commented Mayor Wood. "Twenty-nine families were provided a Thanksgiving dinner thanks to the generosity of the City of Mishawaka employees, Martin's Supermarkets and the Youth Council's hard work."